

received Sept. 7, 1918.

August 1, 1918.

Dear Mother and Dad;

As I sit here and look over the peaceful valley of the River- I can't help but draw contrasts to what I have just passed through, and thank God for His blessings and protection, without His help, I would not be here to write.

We have just come back again from one of the hottest sectors of open fighting on the line.

Believe me, we have been giving the Germans Hell in every form possible. I am now happy and well. I soon felt better after getting some sleep, because, up in the line, we are lucky if we sleep three out of twenty four hours.

The other night, in one of our forward manoeuvres, we marched through a woods six and twelve inches in mud, and a pouring rain. It was midnight, and we could not see a hand in front of us, we at last came to our position, and that night, I used a German dug-out and a German blanket to sleep with. My blanket, owing to the weight, being thrown away.

During the night, we had an alarm, and marched several more miles, the next day, we came back to the dug outs and finished four more hours of sleep. When I got up I took a wash from a German helmet which had been upside down and had rain water in it.

In these dugouts we found boxes of supplies ammunition, signal rockets and bombs. Before we were allowed to go in the huts or touch anything, all wires were cut and everything investigated. The Germans had been driven out so fast, they did not have a chance to fix up any of their devilish schemes, which they try so often.

Just before we came out, they brought a bunch of German prisoners past, some were all bloody, and they were a mess. None of them except the Machine Gunner, had a steel helmet, Germany is calling these in owing to lack of steel for shells.

In one of the dugouts, we saw signs of Women living with the German Officers. One of the Machine Gun Crews, killed, was composed of women dressed in military men's clothes. Several times we have found German machine gunners chained to their guns, and snipers chained to trees, so as they had to fight or be shot by their own officers.

The ground we last occupied was covered with shells, bombs, clothes, and all kinds of stuff which the Germans could not take with them, several German guns were taken, in good condition, these, the Americans used against the Germans, she shelling them with their own shells.

I just came back from washing, and met some of the boys. Harry and all of them are well and happy. We often have little re-unions especially after an engagement. to see if all are safe and well. So far, we all are eating and kicking, well and strong.

Today, I got new shoes and clothes, a good bath, and I feel like a new man.

Yesterday, who should clap me on the back, but George Matthews Mary M's friend, of course we had a good little chat and swapped stories. You spoke about Ames Geikler, over here, I saw him and of course made myself known, he is the one who lives next to Uncle Lawrence on Sydenham St. It certainly was some day for meeting old friends. I also got three letters from you, one from Ets, Ma, Miss Curry.

You spoke about getting the signature of my Major, for a box from home, it don't work now only the Colonel's signature is good, and that is impossible to get.

The only way you can send the stuff is through Gimbels, or J. Wanamaker's I still need, very, very badly, the razor straight only, a good strong, many bladed knife, cigar lighter, and alluminous watch. The cigars and Tobacco, thank goodness, I am getting quite regularly, at the good old Y. M. C. A., and once in a while some chocolates and cake.

The other day, way up in the front line, our Y. M. C. A. man got up to us, a truck load of eats. I got a hold of one package of cakes small can plum pudding, bar chocolate, five cigars, one package of cigarettes, and two ten cent tins of tobacco, wasn't that fine, and lucky?

The Y. M. C. A. here, is doing a work which nobody in the U. S. realizes how much good it is doing for us. These little bits of cheer are of wonderful value to us, and help keep us cheerful and contented. I have nothing but praise and Good luck for the Y. M. C. A. over here. They are doing the same work all over, there is no other way in which you could send stuff, that I know of.

You can send a money order, once in awhile and that will help me to buy the stuff, when I get a hold of it, I would be pleased if you would send me, once in awhile, Papers, and Life, Judge, Colliers, or any Magazine, easy to mail.

I am glad to hear Jock is behaving so nicely, and Pinky with him, they make a good pair.

Tell Aunt Ella I have had some real French Fries, and Eggs, from a French woman, but they were not in it, compared with hers, she has got them all skinned.

Give my love to everybody, and tell them all to write. I sincerely hope Uncle Lawrence is not drafted. Are you still receiving my allotment, 15 and 10? is not, let me know.

As ever, wishing for your health and happiness, I am,

Your loving son,

Howard.